



# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

JUNE 1989

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*Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.*

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JUNE 1989

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## 25 Years Ago!

At the different levels of the Church's life, in the local parish in the national and international sphere of Church's life, there is need to develop techniques and programmes of social service and action which will make a contribution towards humanizing the social and technological revolution which is taking place in all the social groups. This requires rethinking of the nature and structure of the Church's life in a changing society.

In the collapse and disintegration of the cultural patterns of the countries of the East Asia, the Christian Church has a task to provide a principle of redefinition which makes possible the reintegration and development of a cultural basis conducive to responsible living.

—Churchman

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# Communication Process—Diffusion of New Ideas



'There are other sheep... I must bring them too; they will listen to my voice...' John 10 : 16.

Diffusion is the process by which an innovation spreads in the social system. The development of a society involves the diffusion of new ideas or innovations so that new ways of thinking and new ways of doing become common in the society. In fact this process becomes the basis of cultural change. All cultural changes are initiated by individuals and they are diffused in a social system through communication from one individual to another. It may be said that new ideas are diffused in a society when many members of the society adopt the new ideas or new practises. Many of our ideas and innovative methods which are thoroughly discussed in our committees and meetings are not practised. This is because they remain only a 'paper-work'—they are not diffused in any church, or area. Unless the communication process takes place the ideas which are conceived to bring the desired change will prove to be a futile exercise.

We should note that not all individuals in a society are ready to accept the new ideals, whether religious or social, and adopt new ways. Even if some do, they may not start the diffusion process, they may never encourage other people in the group to adopt the new ways. It is also possible that an individual who is eager to adopt new ways and new practises may also be eager to spread them so that other people in the group also adopt these new practices. They may bring the people to their homes or gatherings and show them how they have adopted the new ways of doing things. They may give all the information that they need and discuss freely, respecting their views. The individuals who adopt new ideas and practices and also encourage other people to do so are designated as 'opinion leaders'. These are

the most important people in the diffusion of innovations in a group. Church needs to develop these opinion leaders in order to communicate its new ideas.

There is a close relationship between cultural norms of a group and the possibility of diffusion of new ideas. The norms of social system may either welcome the change or offer resistance to change. The social system with modern norms is more rational than the social system with traditional norms. Unless we study carefully these norms and understand the background it will be difficult to communicate effectively. The social system with traditional norms is characterised by a lack of ability to empathize. Because of their social situation, the people are unable to put themselves in the role of others within the system as well as outside. The Harijan labourer, the village sweeper, or the barber have to follow the caste occupation in the rural areas. That is how they were taught. These people could never even imagine themselves to be the 'Presidents' or 'Surpunches' of the village, much less as the legislators or ministers. Their whole self-image is limited to the traditional parental occupation. Another characteristic is the low level of literacy and education. In spite of all the advances over the decades the literary rate is only thirty percentage. Though a large number of boys are enrolling themselves in schools, the figures regarding wastage and stagnation are formidable. As for girls, the enrolment is very low and wastage is very high. With respect to communication, the traditional society depends on the word-of-mouth communication. Large masses even in towns and cities depend on oral communication from person to person. As a result, there is little communication with persons outside the small social system both in the rural as well as in the urban areas. The second feature with



respect to communication is the preponderance of the 'localities'. Most of the people are interested only about the events and the persons within the village or within the neighbourhood. Thus their horizon becomes very limited. In the same way, the members of the upper classes are unable to empathize with those lower ones and put forth genuine efforts to improve their lot.

*It is obvious that the social system with modern norms*

is in contrast to the social system with traditional norms. The people are not only literate but better educated and more rational in their outlook. They are trained to be on the look out for new things so that many of them are themselves engaged in innovations within their fields. These studies should help us to know to which section we intend to diffuse our ideas and with what motivation.

DASS BABU

## Sadhu Sundar Singh Centenary Celebration

The National Missionary Society has taken the initiative in organizing various programmes for the celebration of the birth centenary of Sadhu Sundar Singh which commenced on September 3, 1988. The programmes include:

1. Publication of Sadhu's biography as well as his writings in English and in Indian languages by C.L.S. and I.S.P.C.K. The complete writings of the Sadhu in one volume is planned to be released by C.L.S. on Sept. 3, 1989.
2. Presentation of the Life of the Sadhu in the traditional as well as sophisticated media.
3. The collection of funds to be invested as an endowment for Missionary work among the Tibetians through the N.M.S. The target for the Sadhu Sundar Singh endowment funds is Rs. 5 lakhs.
4. Ecumenical cum Evangelical Celebration throughout the year by the Churches in India.

5. Releasing of a souvenir and postal stamp.

Your prayers are solicited and you are requested to send your contributions to the Treasurer.

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## New Zealand: Parishes in New Church Union Push For the People

Wellington—Union and cooperating parishes around New Zealand are mounting a renewed effort for church union on the national level. A national conference of such ventures is to meet here in August.

Diane Miller-Keeley, minister at Chartwell Cooperating Parish (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian) in Hamilton, says a goal of the meeting is to 'rekindle the ecumenical vision which the denominational churches have let die. We must... lead the way forward for our partner churches' (a reference to the national denominations), but 'avoid forming a sixth denomination'.

At the Negotiating Churches Unity Council, five denominations have been considering national union for decades.

Their union and cooperating parishes cooperative ventures include Presbyterian (139), Methodist (135), Anglican (57), Congregational (6), and Disciples (16) participants.

With national union efforts stalled, Shirley Simms, minister at Ngaio Union Church here, says parishes like hers are 'in a vacuum, largely abandoned by partner churches'. The denominations 'made certain promises in the 60s. We are going ahead on the basis of those promises and we expect' them to 'come along with us'. Glen Robertson, a member of St. Andrew's Union Church here, says the denominations have shown great insensitivity to such parishes, being much more concerned about their own structures. So, he says, such ventures need a forum to express views and help resolve identity crises.



# Trumpet Making Uncertain Sound\*

REV. DR. K. C. ABRAHAM, *Bangalore*

1 Cor. 14 : 8

If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?

Several images are used to describe the role and function of a minister. The one that is suggested by the text is that of a watchman who is responsible for alerting the people of impending danger from enemies. His trumpet call prepares the people for battle.

In the Old Testament, a prophet is described as a watchman. Ezekiel takes up this image in Chapter 33 and says what an awesome responsibility the watchman has. If he sees the enemy and does not sound the trumpet then the whole city can be under siege. He says if this happens the watchman is held responsible. The judgement will be upon him. The watchman's role, his trumpet call is very crucial for the safety and life of the people. He may not be a clever strategist or heroic soldier, but if he does not give timely warning, all strategies and heroism of people amount to nothing. His role is crucial in that he is always alert, is a keen observer—a participant observer, if you will, who has an overall view of the situation at hand.

Paul uses this image in the context of his reflection of the ministry of tongues. Here he is not so much concerned about the watchman's failure to make a trumpet call. But Paul is concerned about the watchman giving uncertain, unclear or indistinct call.

If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will prepare for the battle? It is important to give clear and certain sound and you are called for that.

How relevant is this emphasis! In recent months people have heard indistinct, confused sounds from the diocese. Confusing sounds of personal rivalry, misuse of institutional power, selfishness, partisan interests and division.

In the wider church, we hear the sound of crusaders, faith-healers and the propagandist of instant salvation. There are cults and sects that offer palliatives to our misery and sickness. There is the call of religious and ethnic groups clamouring for their rights. We are also told social activism is the most certain sound of the Gospel. All these are confusing indeed.

In Corinth, in the mid century of our era, a trumpet had sounded. There was confusion and controversy in this mighty commercial centre. In this harbour town, there was a small insignificant congregation of Christians, exposed to many confusing sounds of the city. We are told that philosophical and ethical slogans could be read

along the street: 'The wise man is King'—'All belongs to the wise', 'Knowledge is Freedom', they would proclaim. There were many mystery cults, many rituals and ecstasies. There were Appollos-party, Cephas-party and even Jesus-party. Then the sound and fury raised by people who spoke in tongues.

Paul refused to be identified with any party. But he was a fighter. He uses a battle imagery—to speak relevantly to the situation. He directs his attention to very practical questions and action involving faith and hope.

Whether to marry and why? Whether to eat food offered to the temple? Where is the line between freedom and bondage? How are the strong to deal with the weak?

There is a beautiful love poem and a discussion on the life after death. The letter ends in reassuring the church of the healing power of love which even overcomes the tragedy of death.

What does it all amount to? It is nothing but searching the meaning and fulfilment of human life in our responsibility for one another and to God. It involves discerning the signs of time, in history and in our relationships. It involves affirming forces that humanize the world and reject such forces and systems that destroy human life and nature. For Paul the clue to all this is the death and resurrection of Jesus. He is the bearer of the secret of the meaning and fulfilment of human life.

The trumpet sound said: Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and Risen in the Wisdom of God and the power of God! But if the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall make ready to battle? Your task is to make a clear, distinct trumpet sound in the midst of confusing sounds that prevail in our church as well as in our society.

Now taking cue from the trumpet sounding St. Paul and keeping in mind our situation, let me specify three areas where we need a clearer vision, a distinct sound of the trumpet.

First of all, we need a clearer call about spirituality—a spirituality that takes you nearer to the daily struggles of the people. Avoiding theological abstraction and sloganizing, you should also resist the temptation of constructing an artificial spirituality offered as a palliative to the sufferings of the people. Rather their struggles, for daily rations, an adequate employment, the fight against caste discrimination, protection from the harassment of the police or the fear and suspicion from their neighbours who may profess a different faith—all these provide the context for our spirituality. True enough, our commitment to the Master is the source of our spirituality. But we are under a false illusion if we live as if this commitment is deepened in isolation from others. Our commitment to Christ is deepened and strengthened only when we enter

\* This sermon was preached at the services of Ordination at the St. Mark's Cathedral, Karnataka Central Diocese.



more deeply and sensitively into the pains and problems of our people. That certainly was the experience of the saints, although they have at times internalised these conflicts.

Our prayer life and devotional life is important. But they should be formed in relation to the experiences of being with the people. As Bonhoeffer has said, 'We ought not try to be more religious than God Himself'.

The City of Joy is a beautiful book, written by a foremost epic narrator of our times, French author Lappier who wrote the 'Freedom at Midnight'. It is the sad story of the life and struggles of people in the Calcutta slums. There is the story of the rikshaw puller struggling along with the red fever, who raises money to support his family by selling his blood and selling in advance his skeleton. Also there is a description of the 'life' of the leper colony with all the nauseating stench and misery.

But the story is also about a Polish priest who chose to live with the people in slums, exactly the way slum people live—in huts eating the same food. His encounter with a leper is given in moving words. The point is, in that poverty-stricken situation he found a community with them which is the source of spirituality for him.

Secondly, the trumpet should clearly proclaim that the church is a community of God—a community of love, justice and reconciliation.

The Biblical witness is clear that Christian life is fundamentally a life in community. There is no solitary Christian—Paul in our text maintains that the test of individual spiritual gifts is whether they serve not only the individual but the community as a whole. The church has the task and responsibility of not only challenging the world with its proclamation of the Gospel, but itself living the message of liberation and reconciliation which it preaches.

Yet we know our churches are divided along caste, language and other lines of separation. The 1948 Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches made this statement:

'The evils of the world have so deeply penetrated our churches, so that amongst us to those all worldly standards

of success, class division, economic rivalry, a secular mind. Even where there are no differences of theology language or liturgy there exist churches segregated by race and colour, a scandal within the Body of Christ. We are in danger of being salt that has lost its savour and fit for nothing.'

How contemporary these words are! As ministers reconciliation is our primary concern. Differences need not and should not divide us. In fact the principle of God's creation is differentiation. That adds to the richness of our life. It should provide a context for dialogue and deepening of the Vision of God's humanity. Respecting the differences, we need to build a community of love. 'Unity-in-tension'—is a phrase used by the faith and order of the World Council of Churches. That aptly describes the character of our church life. In recent years they have said our search should be aimed at 'beyond-unity-in-tension'.

Finally, our trumpet call is about a new beginning possible in Christ. The church is constantly open to God's forgiving and redeeming power. Repentance metanoia is the message that was proclaimed by Jesus. It is a way of turning to God's grace. We are no more burdened by our past, but are open to entering into a new relationship in Love. Accept the other, even the one who is different or hostile to us, as a brother for whom Christ died. Certainly the acceptance of the other is costly: Righting of wrong relationships involves pain, cost. That is the message of the Cross. In many of us there is much hidden resentment and rebellion—which is rarely allowed to come to surface—which prevent us from being happy relaxed Christians. When we are exposed to the Cross, the reality of selfless love of Jesus, all those burdens seem to slip away and we are not determined by them. That is the Gospel. That is the trumpet sound.

Former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammer Skjold in his famous devotional classic, *Markings*, has the words:

'Each day the first day, each day a life. Each morning we must hold out the chalice of our being to receive carry and give back.'

It must be held out empty, for the past must only be reflected in its polish, its shape, its capacity.'



# An Invitation to Explore

DR. HARRY MOORE

'Because it is there!' is the answer one receives to the question put to the mountaineer, 'why did you climb the mountain?' In every phase of life the same motive finds expression. The scientist, in any field, pursues his/her research as far as he/she can; the explorer (and nowadays the space explorer) goes on and on as far as possible, always pushing on the frontiers, 'because they're there'.

It seems that there is, deep in the human heart, a ready response to an invitation to explore. Jesus issued and answers, such an invitation to his disciples. In the first chapter of John's Gospel—in a brief but graphic account of the call of Nathaniel—we read that Philip told Nathaniel, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about... Jesus of Nazareth'. Nathaniel replied, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' 'Come and see', is the reply. When Jesus met with Nathaniel in that strangely fleeting encounter, Jesus said, 'You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig-tree. You shall see greater things than these'. And in the 14th chapter of John comes the even more startling promise, verse 12, 'I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things because I am going to the Father'.

The invitation is clear, 'come follow' and it is to a shared exploration of the pathway of obedience to the living God; shared, that is, with the living Christ.

Max Warren was one of those who, holding firmly to a personal and biblical faith in Christ, sought to explore the way ahead in a constant exploration of the meaning of 'the Great Commission'. It is interesting to read in Dr. Dillistone's biography of Max, *Into all the World*: 'we find him one March evening in 1968 going to Blackheath (his home) to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the publication of *Honest to God*, he having been a reader of the original manuscript and having warmly encouraged John Robinson to get it into print'.

At the same time *Honest to God* caused a great controversy among some church folk about Bishop Robinson's orthodoxy, though it is recorded that many found his writing an enormous help in trying to comprehend the Gospel in contemporary terms. In the last resort, if he does not comprehend the Gospel in contemporary terms, one will not be apprehended by the Lord of the Gospel.

Dr. Alistair Kee's recently published book *The Roots of Christian Freedom* is a penetrating and intellectually demanding study of the theology of Bishop A. T. Robinson. In addition to the many published works of John Robinson, Dr. Kee also had access to Dr. Robinson's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation which he suggests is often the key to Robinson's later writings.

Many who were alarmed at what Bishop Robinson wrote saw him as a controversialist, an iconoclast wanting

to tear down accepted doctrines and beliefs. Dr. Kee sees it differently: 'he was trying to do two things at once; to recover the truly biblical roots of the Christian faith and on this basis to indicate how Christian faith might develop in this time of constant change'.

Indeed, John Robinson, in his study of the New Testament, held surprisingly conservative views for one so questioning. These views, however, were not based on conservative or fundamentalist premises; rather they were based on a determined exploration of what the Bible says and what the biblical writers were trying to communicate.

The Robinson method was to challenge the assumptions upon which others made their pronouncements and based their interpretations. Again and again he discovered that the assumptions were no longer valid and the terms used in theological language were no longer appropriate in this age, given the present state of understanding of our world.

Thus, for those who are willing to have their basic assumptions challenged and who are willing to think hard and to return to the Bible and what the Bible says, J. A. T. Robinson has not provided a new set of static immutable assumptions but rather an invitation to an exploration.

The link between the world of the mission partner and the agencies of the Church in mission and this exploration of the theological basis of our faith, is strong. One of John Robinson's firm conclusions was that God is personal and that every theological interpretation and therefore every act of Christian obedience, must be based on personal relationships with a God of whom it can be said, 'God is love'.

Those who are engaged in mission and who reflect upon it in the context of their own discipleship of the God of love and their fellowship in the wider Church, discover again and again the importance of recognising things as they are.

In many places we are beginning to see that it is not only academic theologians who have taken responsibility for thinking Christianly about everyday mission. Indeed, there is a strong parallel movement, in every continent, of a new grass-roots theology that is being hammered out as Christians become bold enough to face the deepest questions they can pose and to question hitherto taken-for-granted assumptions.

The basic communities of South America are the most conspicuous example of those accepting the invitation to exploration, but we see the same movement here and there in Africa, in small corners of our own country, in Asia at large and we wait with bated breath to see what God will bring forth as doors open behind the Iron Curtain and in China.



Dr. Arthur Glasser, Head of the Conservative Evangelical School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, recently invited Dr. David Bosch of South Africa to 'share in a candid and positive fashion' his thoughts on the School of World Mission and its teaching.

He describes himself as an 'ecumenical evangelical' or an 'evangelical ecumenical'. In other words, he is an evangelical Christian who is also active in the affairs of the World Council of Churches and sees the Gospel in rounded 'holistic' terms. How bold it was, therefore, of Arthur Glasser to invite David Bosch to lecture at the School of World Mission. How encouraging it is that evangelical leaders and thinkers of different points of view can not only give each other a hearing, but indeed invite candid and positive criticism of a clearly enunciated position. It was Max Warren's great desire and, when it happened, great joy that people of different theological standpoints and different spiritual experiences, should share their vision and their thinking rigorously and generously. This same spirit is discernible in the writings of Bishop John Robinson.

In his generous and gracious lecture to the School of World Mission, David Bosch urges that from the basis of a belief in the unity of the Church, which is the will of God, those of more conservative views should actively encourage the exchange of vision, experience and understanding with those of conciliar views. He has a memorable sentence: 'Ever since the Second Vatican Council I have been haunted by the question whether Protestants are not to blame for the fact that Catholics took more than four centuries to begin with the reformation for which they were not ready in the 16th century'.

The need is great, in this generation of Christians, to capitalise on this new openness to each other and to ultimate questions which come out of a return to the text of the New Testament.

After the Lambeth Conference, one of the African bishops said, 'I learned that the Bishop of Durham is not what the press has led us to believe'. Of course, we do not always discover that we all mean the same thing, that only our words separate us. There are fondly held positions backed up by long-standing assumptions that also separate us. Dr. Bosch in his lecture touched on a number of theological views in the Church Growth School, among them, 'the primacy of evangelism'. This is one of the most often quoted sayings in the best evangelical circles. In spite of the fact that for years CMS has stood for an integrated view of the Gospel wherein evangelism, renewal and unity of the Church and all the justice issues are seen to belong together in one comprehensive salvation, one still hears in CMS circles from time to time of the primacy of evangelism.

Dr. Bosch makes his point at some length, but he questions the validity of general priorities of Christian action applying to every place or every time and says that it is too simplistic to say that 'evangelism is the seed, the root, once people are Christians they will transform

Society'. He goes on: 'While not denying the germ of truth in this approach, I submit that it is an oversimplification. It is simply not true that regenerated people as a matter of course act justly toward their neighbours. In my own country many of the worst racists are 'born again Christians' and I doubt whether it is essentially different in the USA. At Berlin 1966 (World Congress on Evangelism) a black American evangelical said, 'Law did for me and my people in America what empty and high-powered evangelical preaching never did for a hundred years'.

The point I am making here is that not only is Dr. Bosch expressing a point of view which has long been dear to CMS, he was making it to a group of Christians of the Institute of Church Growth who have held publicly to the 'primacy of evangelism'. And, here is the encouraging factor, he had been invited to share his insights which are already well known by Dr. Glasser, of that on-going action.

Dr. Bosch did not finish his lecture before he had restated what he had said before: 'those of us who help to the unity of the Gospel and emphasise the need for an obedient witness to Christ, which is appropriate to specific people and circumstances, also must not evade the burning concern of the 'Church Growth School' for those who have never heard the Gospel'. He repeated his review of an important book by the eminent evangelist and missiologist Dr. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*. Bosch had written, 'There are so many valid challenges in McGavran's book, challenges which all of us ought to take up. So much of what this grand and intrepid old man is drawing our attention to is of utmost importance so many missionaries and churches are guilty of the mistakes and shortcomings he identifies, that we ignore at our peril his passionate pleas for a reorientation of much of what we do as churches. I firmly believe that the essence of what McGavran stands for can be integrated into a theologically sounder framework. Let those of us who differ from him not be found wanting in remedying the maladies he diagnoses so correctly'.

Without a doubt, to journey together with those who sharply differ from us is painful. But, in Christ, it is possible. For to be in Christ means to be on a pilgrimage of exploration, being led into the truth, not just in idea but in real relationships with all sorts of people, by the Spirit of God.

The missionary relationship is just such a pilgrimage. An invitation is issued, 'come and help us'; or sometimes the invitation may be from the other side, 'please let us come and join you, for we have heard the call from the high', but the journey on which the partners to the invitation go will always be a journey of exploration in which the risen Lord will reveal his purposes in and through those who are willing to accept his invitation in the exploration of the unfolding purposes of God.

Such a view of missionary work may not be that which is classically expressed in the literature of a former time but I venture to suggest it is true to Jesus of Nazareth as we meet him in the Bible and as we meet him in the fellowship of his people in mission.



# World Conference on Mission and Evangelism

FRANCIS SMITH

SAN ANTONIO—Christians are called by God to proclaim the good news, act with those who struggle for justice and dignity, share the earth's resources justly and witness through renewed mission structures.

This is part of the message 500-plus participants from more than 100 countries took away from the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, sponsored at Trinity University by the World Council of Churches here (22-31 May).

At its opening plenary, Eugene Stockwell, director of the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, challenged Christians to share their faith with sensitivity and conviction, but also to be open to God's gifts in other faiths, leaving to God 'the decisions about ultimate salvation'.

He called attention to the strong impact of 'secularistic, technological, consumerist and often militarist cultures' that masquerade as Christian. He urged conference participants to 'affirm the many cultures of the poor'. He also stressed the importance of the local in unity and mission.

In other addresses, WCC General Secretary Emilio Castro said 'mission in Christ's way must start from the marginalized sectors of society and move upwards towards the domes of power'. CWME Moderator Anastasios Annoulatos said 'Christian life means continual assimilation of the mystery of the cross in the fight against individual and social selfishness'.

The first-ever presence of representatives of other religions at the conference consultants reflected the growing ecumenical prominence of interfaith issues.

Former CWME director and retired (United) Church of South India bishop Lesslie Newbigin cautioned that dialogue could sometimes compromise the Christian mission to 'confess the truth we have found in Jesus Christ'.

But he also observed that Christians cannot communicate who Jesus Christ is unless they listen to and learn from people of other faiths, and that 'the mercy of God is greater than anything any of us can compose in a rational illogism'.

Much of the time, the conference met in four sections: 'Turning to the Living God', 'Participating in Suffering and Struggle', 'The Earth is the Lord's' and 'Towards Renewed Communities in Mission'.

In connection with their reports, the sections suggested several 'acts in faithfulness' by which individual Christians and groups, the church (or parts of it) and others could act on section concerns.

Some of the proposed acts were presented for—and received—full conference approval, as did a conference message. But the section reports and other proposed acts are considered section, not conference-wide, documents.

Mission extends to God's creation, observed one section. 'The responsibility of the church towards the earth is a crucial part of the church's mission', it said. It called for changes in lifestyle, concern for ecological issues, but also solidarity with the landless, the marginalized, and refugees.

Participating in suffering and struggle is at the heart of God's mission and will, said another section. 'Suffering is not to be romanticized; rather it is to be overcome through struggle'. Followers of Jesus Christ are invited to participate in struggles for the transformation of society, it said.

The section advocated support for a Palestinian homeland. 'Since we already accept the State of Israel as a reality, our focus is on the struggle for the State of Palestine', it said. It urged withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories, including Syria and Lebanon. It asked US church bodies to press the US government to withhold military and economic aid to Israel until 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinians are achieved'. It added a distinction 'between the state of Israel and Zionism on the one hand and Jews and Judaism on the other'.

The section also talked about the 'tacit complicity' of US 'churches, para-church organizations and sects' in the 'dominating role' played by some US institutions in places like the Philippines, South Korea, South Africa, Namibia and Latin America. US church bodies were asked to cease support of 'an ideology of domination' that supports suffering and to turn over 10 per cent of their capital to programmes of economic justice in the United States over five years.

Another section reiterated earlier WCC affirmations on witnessing. 'We commit ourselves and challenge our churches to cooperate in witnessing to the millions of people who have not yet had an opportunity to respond to the Gospel,' it said. This witness does not preclude dialogue with people of other living faiths; dialogue 'extends and deepens our witness'. It pledged work with people of other faiths for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Referring indirectly to Lausanne II, a meeting of evangelical Christians in the Philippines in July, the conference called on those represented here to work for 'a joint world mission conference in the future'.

One section report said popular religiosity and movements among the poor in different parts of the world



have 'enormous potential for the renewal of the church and human communities'.

Christians who work in other lands or cultures were urged to become 'agents of the whole gospel, involving both proclamation and participation in the struggles for liberation of the poor and the oppressed'. Resources for ecumenical sharing, said one report, should be 'set around a common table'.

One section made a plea to include in decision-making those marginalized on grounds of sex, age, ethnic, origin, disability, economic situation, or political allegiance. Women and youth were specifically mentioned.

For some conference participants, a high point came in a guided, meditational walk along the way of the cross around the campus reflecting on Jesus' call to solidarity

with those who suffer. Others ranked daily worship and small-group Bible study high.

Weekend visits to 75 congregations around the state of Texas were for many a chance to see mission in action and to share information about themselves in church school classes, sermons and after-church events.

Reporting on their preconference meeting, youth participants said that under current economic arrangements every child born in the South is in effect in debt to his or her counterpart in the North. They called for 'mutual solidarity' that seeks justice, is based on local action and commitment and accords with God's will.

Attending their first such mission conference in decades were representatives (eight) from China. The 48-member Roman Catholic contingent included 21 people officially appointed by the Vatican.

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# Message from World Mission Conference

This is excerpted from the message released at the close of the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism in San Antonio, 22 May—1 June.

In the name of the Triune God,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
Saviour and Comforter  
people gathered from all parts of the world  
in San Antonio, Texas—USA,  
as a World Mission and Evangelism Conference  
of the World Council of Churches,  
under the theme—YOUR WILL BE DONE,  
MISSION IN CHRIST'S WAY.

The two most significant trends of this conference were the spirit of universality (catholicity) of the gathering, and concern for the fullness of the Gospel, namely :  
to hold in creative tension

- spiritual and material needs,
- prayer and action,
- evangelism and social responsibility,
- dialogue and witness,
- power and vulnerability,
- local and universal.

Mirror of that diversity,

San Antonio is a multicultural city  
where many strands meet, clash and intermingle :  
Hispanic, Anglo-saxon, Black, Indigenous Peoples,  
Others.

In this context, the gathered people looked ahead to 1992, the 500th anniversary of the conquest of the Americas, a time when the Gospel Message was brought to these lands under the auspices of colonial powers, which often distorted Christian love with violence and oppression. The heirs and survivors of the indigenous people recall this date with bitterness. This past cannot be undone, its separation must be done to redeem the future, and the hands of all people must join to weave a new world community.

\* \* \* \* \*

Concerned with the discernment of the Will of God in today's world, the representatives of the churches gathered in San Antonio, and spoke about shared signs of hope and renewal. They celebrated the new opportunity for religious expression in many socialist countries. They realized that the Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, Freedom, Communion and Justice is at work today in different parts of the world.

Communities and even entire nations, in unexpected ways, are involved in self-examination, repentance, renewal and struggle for justice, turning to the Living God, stressing the infinite value of human dignity, and turning to one another to make peace.

For all this,  
we rejoice in the Spirit  
we thank the Living God,  
and in these signs we hear a new call to faith,  
and see a new challenge for mission and evangelism.

At the same time, Christ is still suffering in many parts of the world, and is waiting for our concrete response : solidarity and action. We have heard many voices of anguish and pain. ....God calls us, Christians everywhere, to join in proclaiming the good news of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ, acting in solidarity with those who suffer and struggle for justice and human dignity, sharing justly the earth's resources, bearing witness to the gospel through renewed communities in mission.

\* \* \* \* \*

To those who hear or experience a twisted or partial Gospel, or no Gospel at all :

Mission in Christ's Way calls us by deed and word to share the wholeness of the Gospel,  
the love of God revealed in the incarnate Word,  
Jesus Christ.

To churches and nations where divisions, barriers and enmities prevail :

Mission in Christ's Way calls us to strive for unity with justice as a basis for effective mission.

To peoples of wonderfully diverse cultures across the earth :

Mission in Christ's Way calls us to extend understanding and respect,  
relating the Gospel of Christ to these cultures with sensitivity.

To persons of other religious faiths of the world :

Mission in Christ's Way calls us to listen to and respect their beliefs,  
witness our faith to them in word and deed,  
seek with them for peace and justice.

To young people and all those resisting injustice and war, facing repression and death :

Mission in Christ's Way calls us to solidarity in the struggle for life,  
turning hopelessness into strength.

To those whose land and livelihood are taken away, despoiled or polluted :

that basic justice may extend to all.

To those who suffer and whose life is threatened, exploited, shattered or oppressed :

Mission in Christ's Way calls us to commit all in our power  
to defend life in all its fullness and self-determination for every human being, community and nation.

Proclamation of the Kingdom,  
and of hope for the whole creation,  
of a Mission in Christ's Way  
is not just an affirmation,  
but a way of life.

We are called to concrete acts of faithfulness,  
a living expression of the prayer that Christ taught us  
'YOUR WILL BE DONE'.

[EPS]



# New WCC Mission Director Notes Priorities Ahead

REV. DR. C. DURAISINGH

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SAN ANTONIO—Equipping congregations for mission, drawing out mission implications of the vitality of new Christian movements and transforming international mission relations are three priorities for the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches in the coming years, according to Christopher Duraisingh. The 51-year-old (United) Church of South India theologian, since 1985 general secretary of the London-based Council for World Mission, becomes CWME director 1 August, succeeding the retiring Eugene Stockwell.

Speaking here on the last day (31 May) of the WCC World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, the director-designate called 'universality and inclusiveness' the most significant mission emphases to emerge from its discussions. A practical implication of that for CWME, he said, is more inclusive participation in its work, 'among other things greater dialogue and conversation with evangelicals and enhanced participation of the Orthodox'.

Whether or not the next world mission conference is jointly sponsored by the WCC and global evangelical groups, as some have suggested, 'both streams of missiological thinking and practice ought to influence each other more directly'.

He said the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization has 'had an impact on us already by calling us to a clearer articulation of the specificity of the gospel, the decisiveness of God's love in Jesus Christ. We need to explore jointly what that means'. At the same time, the ecumenical movement 'would want to affirm that concern for planting churches in every part of the world is to be critiqued by an understanding of God's will for all people'.

He called for similar mutual support and critique

between mission and interfaith dialogue in the ecumenical movement.

Duraisingh was asked if he believes Jesus Christ is 'the only way' to salvation. He replied that he would say 'unequivocally that in Jesus of Nazareth we have been given decisive knowledge of the love of God; and that it is incumbent on me to witness to that, so that all may come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.'

'The Bible clearly calls me to witness to this reality', he continued. 'But I don't want to move from the witness stand to the judge's bench' and use the affirmation of God's decisive revelation in Jesus Christ as a criterion by which to judge those who do not make this affirmation.

Duraisingh said the missiological accent today should fall on 'bringing the peripheral people within the city gate. God brings the marginalized to centre stage, through the work of Jesus Christ, who died outside the gates'.

He stressed the mission role of the church locally, adding that effective local mission requires equipping people and increased attention to mission education in theological colleges, which he described as 'awfully bad at this time'.

However, he said, that must always honour and cooperate with the church in the local context. Calls in the 1970s for a 'moratorium' on the sending of foreign missionary personnel, he noted, had been aimed at precisely this kind of mutuality. Mission relationships 'still reflect the world economic order, with ownership and control in the North'. An ecumenical priority, he suggested, must be to move towards genuine sharing of personnel and material resources for mission, so that 'ownership is not by any one, but by the oikoumene'.



# Training Programme on Project Planning and Reporting

MR. J. P. MOSES,\* *Nandyal*

I am happy that the CSI Council for Technical and Vocational Training organised an important training programme on 'Project Planning and Reporting' between the 10th and 14th April 1989 at Madras. As a participant of the course I am sure that I will be reflecting the views of all the participants when I state that the course was useful and of practical relevance to us.

27 participants from 18 dioceses were fully involved in the conduct of the training programme. Starting from analysing of the course contents and the time frame, the participants took an active part in all the deliberations of the course. Games and group activities helped break age, experience, qualifications, designation and inhibition barriers and created a conducive environment for learning-sharing experiences.

Inputs provided on the Christian perspective to development; programme initiation and planning; village and poverty analyses; socio-economic, political and cultural aspects; women's development; aspects of skill training; guidelines for project writing; proposal, progress and process reporting; financial reporting and budgeting were absolutely relevant to our project work. The very first input on vision for a new world—enriching the poor spiritually and physically—with the Christian PLUS of selfless service 'love thy neighbour as thyself' set the theme and focus for the training programme.

The Resource Persons were appropriately chosen and had the necessary experience and expertise in their related fields. Ample scope was given for 'open house'

discussions, which was a pleasant and welcome gesture as the speakers welcomed interruptions and cleared doubts as and when they arose and not at the end of the talk, as usually done in most training programmes.

Group exercises in project writing and reporting helped develop skills in analysing village realities and proposing relevant programmes to assist in the alround development of the most deprived sections of society. Synthesis and analysis of data identification of target group, modus operandi in consultation with the people, legal aspects, short-term and long-term objectives were discussed in groups.

The critique on project proposals prepared in groups helped us understand the type of scrutiny they are subjected to even at the preliminary stage. The guidelines and checklist regarding project proposals were systematic and functional, as also allowed flexibility to suit the nature of project.

The participatory evaluation helped us to reflect on what the course really meant to us.

The Chairperson of the Valedictory Session, the Rev. George Karunakaran underlined the need for conducting such need based courses. The valedictory address by Rev. M. Azariah, General Secretary, CSI Synod helped sharpen our focus on the struggles of the people with whom we are to be in solidarity with and what development actually means to them—humanistic development.

I thank the Executive Director, Secretarial, Administrative and Programme Staff of the CSI-CTVT for their team effort in conducting such an useful course for us.

\* Consultant Engineer, Nandyal Diocese.





# Sermon Outlines for the Month of July 1989

Prepared by

REV. J. M. JOGULA, M.A., M.Th., Dharwad.

2-7-1989 : *Seventh Sunday After Pentecost*

*Bible Passages :*

Proverbs 25 : 17-22 ; 1 John 3 : 11-18 ;  
John 15 : 9-17.

*Theme : Love towards Neighbour.*

In this sinful world where hatred was dominating and is dominating even today in all spheres of life, the Christian message of LOVE is proclaimed.

'Neighbours' include our relatives, those who live around us, those who live beyond our reach, our enemies, those who hate us, persecute us. All are our neighbours—no distinction of colour, caste or creed. Jesus Christ taught breaking all barriers.

Only through 'LOVE' the world can survive and humanity can progress. Hatred destroys. One cannot limit the power of destruction but love can. Christ preached love, practiced love, shared the love of God with mankind.

(1) *Proverbs 25 : 17-22 :*

Love shown in action bears fruit. Even enemies can be transformed through love shown in action. Such will bring reward from God. King Saul hated David, but David never took revenge on Saul. David received many blessings from God.

(2) *1 John 3 : 11-18 :*

Theme of this passage is 'Love one another'.

There is a warning. John gives the example of Cain and Abel where hatred dominated and ended in murder of Abel. Death is the result of hatred which is inspired by the evil one. But he who loves is transformed from the realm of death into the realm of life, one who loves has eternal life.

John proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ who gave his life for us. This is because of love of God and love of Christ towards us. John invites us to give sacrificial love as Christ did. He ends this passage with the words which inspire us for action : '.....our love should not be just words and talk, it must be true love, which shows itself in action'. We preach heart-rendering sermons on love. We move crowds to tears, we pretend as if we follow Christ, willing to sacrifice for others. How much of our love is in action?

(3) *John 15 : 9-17 :*

(i) Jesus' Command is 'LOVE', Summary of the Ten Commandments is love.

(ii) Greatest love is to give one's own life for the sake of others. Christ himself showed his love by dying on the Cross.

(iii) Christ chose his disciples and appointed them for fruitful ministry.

*Theme ; Love towards Neighbour.*

9-7-1989 : *Eighth Sunday After Pentecost*

*Bible Passages :*

Proverbs 31 : 20-28 ; 1 John 2 : 7-14 ;  
Luke 10 : 38-42.

*Theme : Service in the Home.*

We always praise 'HOME' as 'Sweet Home'. Home is not a house of walls, doors, windows, rooms but a place where our dear ones and near ones live together. I have a house elsewhere which I have rented it to others. I do not go to that house as my Home, but I go to a house where my family members reside.

Our service in our Home is very important one. We Christians live in this world, but not as of this world. This requires certain priorities in our home and in our life, which are to be set with the guidance of God.

(1) *Proverbs 31 : 20-28*

In these verses the characteristics of a virtuous woman are explained. The TEV calls her 'a capable wife'. Wife has an important role to play in the family. In Proverbs we read that she is wise, hard working, generous, always busy, gentle in speech, looks after family needs. She is respected and praised by her husband and children.

(2) *1 John 2 : 7-14*

Christian characters are to be developed to improve the relationships. 'LOVE' is the key word in this passage. While writing this letter, John accepts the facts of the Christian living. Your sins are forgiven ; you have defeated the Evil one ; you know the Father ; you are strong ; the Word of God lives in you.

All this means that the family in the Home is acceptable in the sight of God, because of their life and witness.

(3) *Luke 10 : 38-42*

What should have the priority in a Home ?

(i) Martha wanted to show that her house is a place where guests are welcomed, respected and treated well. She, as every woman desires, wanted to serve their respect guest i.e., Jesus Christ with special food in time. She should not wait for a long time and be hungry. Mar



alone was not able to cope up with the work in the Kitchen.

Martha asked Jesus to tell Mary to come and help her. Is this the mission of Jesus? Was Jesus to assign household duties to women, so that they feed him?

(ii) No, Mary has chosen the right thing. Jesus has come to call people to himself so that they can see the Kingdom of God and accept the Saviour and become children of God. Priority should be given to the work of Christ.

Many times we struggle to work for Christ, for the Church, forgetting the *Work of Christ* which should be given top priority.

—We hurry up to feed Christ but Christ did not give first priority for this.

—We must hurry up to be fed by Christ, receive spiritual nourishment and be strong. This will last long.

**16-7-1989 : Ninth Sunday After Pentecost**

*Bible Passages :*

Deut. 15 : 7-11. Acts. 11 : 27-30. John 6 : 1-14.

*Theme : Give Ye them to Eat*

The 'VELCOM' Programme of the Church of South India is challenging the local congregations to identify definite situations of need and take steps in action to meet those needs with the resources available locally.

In Deut. 15:7-11, Israelites are asked to help the fellow Israelites who are in need. In meeting the needs of a fellow Israelite, the one who helps is sure to get blessings from God. In V. II an everlasting truth is mentioned i.e., There will always be some Israelites who are poor. Remember the words of Jesus—'you will always have poor people with you....' (Mt. 26 : 11).

In Acts 11:27-30, a concrete situation is explained. A severe famine came when Claudius was the emperor. The disciples of Christ gathered together and decided to send as much help as possible to the fellow believers who lived in Judea. They sent money to the Church elders. The act of the early Christians was inspired by the love of Christ. There was no compulsion; it was an act of sharing whatever they had, with those who were suffering because of famine.

In John 6:1-14, we have the famous passage of Jesus feeding the five thousand.

The words of Jesus—'Give ye them to eat' appear in the narration of this incident in other Gospels. Though these words are not included in John, the words of Jesus—'Make the people sit down' imply the responsibility of the disciples to give the people something to eat.

It is gratifying to note that without embarrassing the disciples, Jesus performed a miracle.

Jesus blessed the bread and fish, but it was the disciples who served and gathered leftover pieces.

We are called to search our resources and share them with those who are in need. We are called to use our resources with care, so that nothing is wasted.

When we are called 'to give them to eat', let us take this in two senses (i) meet the physical needs and (ii) meet the spiritual needs.

**23-7-1989 : Tenth Sunday After Pentecost**

*Bible Passages :*

1 Samuel 18 : 1-5 ; Acts. 2 : 37-47 ;  
Luke 22 : 28-34.

*Theme : Fellowship*

In 1981, the Most Reverend I. Jesudasan, the then Moderator of the Church of South India and also the Chairman of C.S.I. Synod Theological Commission wrote a booklet 'CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP' and the same was published in English and other South Indian languages. This booklet was meant for study in all the Churches in C.S.I. The Author of the booklet has covered various aspects of 'FELLOWSHIP' and I found it very useful.

There are two ways of looking at 'FELLOWSHIP', namely (i) Our fellowship with one another i.e. with fellow human beings individually and in groups ; and (ii) our fellowship with God.

(1) 1 Samuel 18 : 1-5 :

Fellowship of Jonathan with David. Fellowship involved deep affection and love for each other. It involved eternal friendship. Jonathan swore eternal friendship with David. He presented his own precious things to David. Jonathan was a son of a King but David, a son of a Shepherd. Jonathan took lead in establishing this fellowship of love and friendship, and David accepted it.

(2) Luke 22 : 28-34 :

Fellowship of Jesus and his disciples.

We wish to be in fellowship with others when there is prosperity and share fame and glory. Is it not so in our fellowship groups i.e. in Women's fellowship, Youth Fellowship, Lay-Preachers' Fellowship and other groups? Attendance is good only when there are celebrations of festivals, anniversaries and members participate in such activities which are merry making. They withdraw when there are times of struggles, problems in the fellowship groups and local congregations.

In this passage our Lord Jesus Christ appreciates his disciples' efforts in staying with him all through his trials and assures them their share in fellowship with him in ruling i.e. in authority.

While appreciating the participation of his disciples in his trials, he also warns them about Satan, the enemy who is eager to spoil the fellowship. It is by prayer of Jesus himself that the disciples are guarded against the activities of Satan.

(3) Acts 2 : 37-47 :

A beautiful word picture of the early Church, an example of manifestation of fellowship is painted by Luke. Both aspects of fellowship—fellowship of human beings with one another and their fellowship with God are knit together in this passage.

(i) In this fellowship there is privilege of receiving God's gifts—the Holy Spirit.



(ii) Their fellowship with one another strengthened them to live a life which was not selfish but a life that was lived for others, according to the standards given by Christ.

(iii) They expressed their fellowship through learning together, sharing in the fellowship meals and prayers, sharing their material wealth with those in need.

We are called to express our fellowship in action. Take 'VELCOM' programme of the CSI seriously and help the local Churches to grow in the pattern of the early Church.

**30-7-1989. Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost**

*Bible Passages :*

Genesis 45 : 1-15, 2 Corinth 1 : 23-2 : 11 ;  
Luke 7 : 36-50.

*Theme : Forgiveness*

In the Lord's prayer we repeat : 'Forgive us the wrongs we have done as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us' (TEV). 'And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors' (KJV).

(1) *Gen. 45 : 1-15 :*

Forgiveness brings reconciliation. Joseph stands very high because of his greatness in forgiving his brethren who caused him great hardships and pain. He would have

taken revenge on them, as he had all powers to do so. If he had done that, that would have been the end of the story. Beyond all actions of others he saw the guiding hand of God and surrendered himself to the will of God.

(2) *2 Corinthians 1 : 23-2 : 11 :*

Forgiveness encourages change of heart in the Offender for better future.

Where there is no forgiveness, Satan will have upper hand. In taking revenge i.e. not forgiving but forcing severe discipline, we put a person further in deeper sadness which will ultimately make the person lost to good life (V. 7). Forgiveness brings joy and that joy leads to progress. Here the whole Church is called to forgive the Offender, and Paul joins with them.

(3) *Luke 7 : 36-50 :*

Repentance brings forgiveness.

We are to forgive one another and be forgiven by God.

To receive forgiveness one must be aware of his/her fault, action which broke good relationships. This is repentance. Repentance be expressed in action. The sinful woman did express her repentance at the feet of Jesus. Jesus forgave her sins.

Do we forgive others ?

Are we forgiven by God ?

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# Poverty Biggest Cause of Disease

(This report was prepared in the Netherlands by Jim Forest)

'The number one cause of disease in the world is poverty, the end result of oppression, exploitation and war', the Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches has concluded in a draft report on 'health, healing, and wholeness'.

Since 1978, CMC has held 10 consultations on the subject involving medical professionals, pastors, and theologians. In July, its report on the series goes to the meeting in Moscow of the WCC Central Committee.

Despite the value of medicines, expensive medical equipment, immunization programmes, and health education, CMC found these do not significantly alleviate illness caused by poverty.

It also notes the role of armed conflict and other forms of political violence in disease: 'For thousands in the world', it observes, 'state terrorism through "low intensity conflict", torture, imprisonment, and other forms of human-rights violations have made wholeness of health an impossibility. . . . As nations large and small engage in struggles for military and technological supremacy, nuclear wastes proliferate to endanger the health of the whole planet'.

The damaged environment and consumer lifestyles are also seen as greatly hazardous to health: 'What we do to ourselves individually and collectively out of ignorance, greed, or simply lack of self-control causes physical, mental, spiritual, and ecological damage which is not best addressed by medical technology.

'In industrialized countries', it continues, 'over 80 per cent of illness and death is reported to be due to destructive lifestyle and the problem is growing rapidly as a result of "modernization" throughout the world. Heart disease, hypertension and diabetes have accompanied industrial development in many countries as new diets and attitudes towards manual labour are introduced and addicting drugs such as alcohol and nicotine are promoted', the draft report adds.

It criticizes some church-sponsored health care programmes because of 'paternalism . . . inhibiting the development of community resources and the achievement of self-reliance. The resulting dependency on outside resources for health has ultimately served the rich and powerful rather than the poor'.

The draft report stresses the spiritual dimension of health care. 'Even in the midst of poverty, many people are not all, while among the world's most affluent many are chronically ill. Why?'

It answers that 'medical science is beginning to affirm the biblical truth that one's belief and feelings are the ultimate tools and powers for healing. Unresolved guilt, anger, resentment, and meaninglessness are among the greatest suppressors of the body's powerful health-controlling immune system, while loving relationships in community are among its strongest augmenters.

'Those in loving community with God and neighbour not only survive tragedy and suffering best, but grew stronger in the process', it says.

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# 'Christians and Marxists in Cuba'

OFELIA ORTEGA

Cuba is experiencing a 'new momentum' in church-state relations. New possibilities for fruitful collaboration between Christians and Marxists are opening up. And for Protestants and Roman Catholics fresh perspectives may lead to the development of an ecumenical liberation theology.

Church-state relations in Cuba have gone through several historical stages. An initial enthusiasm for the revolution in 1959-1960 was followed by seven years of confrontation. From 1968, periods of coexistence and mutual recognition led to the cooperation of the new momentum beginning in 1980.

However, ... [quoting US Roman Catholic theologian Rosemary Ruether], 'more conservative Christians... tended to reject the revolution and to express this rejection by withdrawing into a kind of internal exile.' This effort by conservatives to evade engagement with the revolution persists to this day.

One of the major difficulties in relationships between Christians and Marxists has been mutual distrust. Without doubt historical reasons for mistrust exist, but as history moves on it should be possible to leave them behind. However, in Cuba the distrust is largely based on ideological preconceptions more difficult to abandon than reality itself.

Christians have been encouraged to believe in the 'duplicity' of Marxists. When a Marxist speaks or acts, the Christian, who does not want to be naïve, is constantly wondering about the Marxist's hidden design, about what the Marxist is really after, and assumes, in any case, some anti-Christian objective.

On the other side, many Marxists mistrust Christians, not only because of historical experiences, but also because of dogmatic Marxism. Such distrust prevents them from understanding the meaning of Christian revolutionary commitment, particularly that of liberation theologians.

The new climate of mutual trust between Christians and Marxists grows out of a number of historical events. Because of the praxis (practice informed by theory) of the Cuban church, which to a large degree did not remain faithful to the demands of the Gospel, Cuban Marxists had to turn to Latin America and especially Nicaragua and El Salvador to learn about revolutionary Christianity.

The Nicaraguan Sandinista Revolution offered new possibilities and challenges because it was the first successful people's revolution in history in which Christians participated on a large scale with full consciousness of their identity. Their understanding of faith and ideology

came together and united in a struggle against a common enemy.

In Nicaragua, no formal intellectual dialogue between theology and ideology took place. Rather, in response to the cry of the poor and the oppressed, similar basic values, commitment, and a common vision were discovered. Faith was the only force available to people to resist oppression and repression.

During his visit to Managua in 1980, Fidel Castro increased his understanding of relations between Christians and Marxists. ... In Nicaragua, Castro saw at first hand the dialogue between priests, pastors, and lay people supporting the Sandinista Revolution.

At the celebration of the 26 July anniversary in Ciego de Avila a few days later in Cuba, Castro said: 'There are some religious leaders in Nicaragua who said to us, "Why speak about strategic alliance? Why not instead speak of unity between Marxists and Christians?" I don't know what the imperialists will think about this. However, I am quite convinced that this combination is highly explosive'.

Things have advanced considerably since then, not because of formal dialogue but because of revolutionary praxis tested over a period of years by genuine Christians and genuine communists.

After more than 20 years of a chill in ecumenical relations, the beginning of a warming period began in 1980. Baptist minister Jesse Jackson was invited by the Baptist church to visit Cuba on the occasion of the commemoration of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Jackson met with President Fidel Castro. They held an extended press conference which was carried on Cuban television. They also went together to the ceremony in memory of Martin Luther King, held in one of the principal Methodist churches in Havana. The new possibilities ecumenically and in church-state relations were evident in the presence of the highest authorities of both Catholic and Protestant churches and of the state and the party.

In February 1985, a delegation from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops visited Cuba. This gesture, which was consistent with the pastoral letter of the US bishops on war and peace made public the year before, was an act of fraternal solidarity on the part of the US church towards its sister in Cuba.

Fidel and Religion, the English translation, was published in 1987 is a book based on 23 hours of conversation between Castro and a Brazilian Dominican priest, Bettio. Published in late 1985, it was received with great interest.

This is excerpted from Christianity & Crisis magazine. A Cuban, Ortega is an associate director of the Programme on Theological Education of the World Council of Churches.

(Contd. on p. 11)

JUNE 1987



# INFANT FORMULA

For two hours (19 April) members of the Nestlé Infant Formula Audit Commission (Nifac) and staff of the World Council of Churches discussed the issue of free supplies of infant formula to health facilities and poor mothers in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Created and funded by Nestlé, Nifac has a charter guaranteeing its independence.

In 1981, the World Health Organization adopted a Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. In 1984, a seven-year boycott of Nestlé products was called off when the Swiss transnational agreed to abide by the code. The boycott was renewed late last year on grounds that the company is violating provisions relating to free supplies.

During the meeting, Nifac affirmed its commitment to obtaining Nestlé's full compliance with the code. Nevertheless, Nifac members stressed that many mothers—such as poor working mothers unable to return home to breastfeed—need to bottlefeed babies for other than medical reasons, and that many rely on free supplies of infant formula. Nifac members said such free supplies to hospitals are motivated by Nestlé's concern for such cases rather than by a desire to promote its products.

Referring to feedback received from its worldwide network of church-related health facilities, David Hilton, associate director of the WCC Christian Medical Commission, said free supplies tempt mothers to bottlefeed and that it is difficult to re-establish breastfeeding once bottlefeeding has started.

Hilton questioned whether free supplies that dry up once mothers leave hospital really help them: 'Our network says they're still seeing children in significant numbers

who're being bottlefed to their detriment and often to their ultimate demise.'

CMC pharmaceutical adviser Kristel Albert stressed the need to promote breastfeeding as a 'sustainable solution' in poor socioeconomic conditions. She said CMC supports the 1986 resolution of the World Health Assembly that infant formula should be purchased through normal procurement channels.

Nifac team members referred to barriers that in their view prevent promotion of breastfeeding, quite apart from the issue of free supplies. These include unwillingness of health institutions and personnel to make extra efforts needed, lack of economic resources and/or political will on the part of governments to implement the code (or to ensure that free supplies reach those said to need them), and the likelihood that Nestlé competitors would continue to send free supplies even if Nestlé stopped.

Nifac affirmed Nestlé's willingness to stop free supplies but argued that the company 'can't establish normal procurement channels by itself.' It suggested that 'simplistic analyses' and 'finger-pointing' do not help resolve a complex problem.

'The reasons babies die', one Nifac member declared, 'is not because of infant formula but because of injustice and inequity.' Another called the renewed boycott 'a diversion that is occupying energies and minimising the possibilities of finding solutions'.

CMC sees such criticism as a sign the boycott is hurting. Last February, CMC wrote all institutions in its network to ask them to adhere to the intentions of the code.

## 'Christians and Marxists in Cuba'—(Contd. from p. 16)

interest, not only in Cuba but throughout Latin America and in Europe.

In Cuba, the book was bought by more than a million people, one-tenth of the population. This broad distribution and discussion of Castro's ideas created a challenge and an incentive to the church. Among many other things, Castro told Betto:

- No inherent contradictions exist between a communist society and Christianity;
- There are doctrinaire Marxists and doctrinaire Christians;
- The Bible has revolutionary value;
- Faith and politics are interrelated;

- In the future, Christian revolutionaries might be members of the communist party in Cuba;
- The revolution is an unfinished product;
- Liberation theology is of importance and value;
- Religion is not, in itself, an 'opiate'.

Fidel and Religion demonstrates that in Cuba an indigenous Marxist theory, both critical and creative, is being worked out. It is developing in close relation with the liberating practice of the people and drawing on the insights of its Cuban revolutionary political leadership: Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Juan Marinello, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Armando Hart.

They in turn draw on the rich legacy left by Jose Martí, father of Cuban nationalism....



# 'Accountability to God'— from the Perspective of the Professional

DR. GEORGE JOSEPH, Madras

It is well to remind ourselves that the Church in India is passing through a momentous period in its history, particularly so in the context of its Healing Ministry. Serious questions are being raised even about the need for and the relevance of this ministry in today's social context.

For the purpose of the discussion, I feel it will be beneficial to build up the thought process on the basis of our fundamental Christian faith as it relates to the concept of 'healing'. Perhaps the most important faith-assumption is that we are called to serve in this ministry in obedience to the 'mandate to heal' which originated from none other than our Lord the Great Physician himself. He has called us to be his co-workers, and our job is essentially one of partnership with the Great Physician. The task at hand is to examine this unique and awe-inspiring relationship with God. It becomes clear that we have joined this ministry at His behest, to carry out tasks and responsibilities according to His plans and to fulfil His mission. When once we understand and accept this unique relationship, the whole outlook and pattern of our ministry would change. Naturally, this would demand changes in our values, relationships and in fact the entire style of our operation and functioning.

Let me refer to a very familiar parable of Jesus which succinctly illustrates this relationship in terms of accountability. Here was a rich man who was about to go on a journey leaving his possessions in the hands of his servants to be returned when he comes back. He called his servants and put them in charge of his property. He is choosy and careful. It is said that he gave each one according to his ability. To one he gave 5000 gold coins to another 2000 and to another 1000.\* It took a long-time for him to return. The story is quite familiar to us. He calls the servants to settle accounts with them. The servant who had received 5000 coins had invested his money wisely and had earned another 5000. 'You gave me 5000 coins, sir, look here are another 5000 that I have earned'. 'Well done you good and faithful servant was the commendation he received. 'You have been faithful in managing small amounts, so I will put you in charge of large amounts. Come on in and share my happiness.' The second servant also had done his job well and received the same appreciation. The third servant however had a different story to tell. Let us not underestimate him. He is a shrewd man. He has his own arguments and convictions. He knew his master well and his attitude. 'I knew you were a hard man. Reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not sowed. I was afraid, I did the coins in the earth. Here is what belongs to you.' Let us now

observe his master's reaction. He does not see to appreciate his servant's logic and is provoked to anger. 'Thou wicked and slothful servant, you knew I was a hard man, reaping where I have not sowed.... Why then didn't you give money to the exchangers that I could get it back with interest—you unprofitable servant.'

As we look at the dramatic personae and the scenario we get a clear idea about the relationship that exist between the master and the steward as well as the covenant that binds them.

Let us put ourselves in the position of the steward entrusted with the responsibility of running of our institutions. We are called to do this in obedience to His command. The Lord has given us the 'mandate to heal'. 'Those who are whole do not require a physician but the sick. I came not to call the righteousness but sinners to repentance.' The goals have been clearly laid down.

Certainly Healing Ministry of the Church is much more inclusive, than care of the physically sick and the conventional hospital services. As the Great Physician, Jesus demonstrated the imperative need for taking care of the body, mind and soul complex—the total being of man. The Samaritan woman whom he confronts at the well asking for a drink of water, the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, chronically ill and carrying the burden of disease for 38 long years, the man with withered hand whom he met in the synagogue, the woman with a bleeding disorder suffering for 12 years, are all considered victims of ill-health and awaiting healing. The mission at hand was to redeem, to restore and to heal each according to his or her specific need and circumstances. Are our institutions Centres of Healing or continue as rehabilitation workshops? Don't we often yield to the temptation of taking credit for having cured people especially those with difficult or abnormal morbidity problems. The trouble with us is that we do not seem to look at the 'healing model' left before us by the Great Physician. Let us for a moment look at the miracle healing of the woman suffering with an issue of blood for 12 years. Here we are presented with a graphic picture of a chronic invalid. She has consulted many eminent physicians and incidentally mortgaged all her wealth and lost everything in the bargain! Jesus could have certainly made capital out of the healing that has been brought about to gain great popularity and certainly material possessions. 'I am the Great Physician' know ye the people of the land, who amidst you with a ready answer to all your diseases. Come and avail of this unique opportunity'. But the master's style of operation was very different. To the woman who fell at his feet trembling with fear, he says 'faith has made thee whole'. In other words, the credit for the instantaneous healing that has taken place goes to you 'Go in peace'. What did these words mean

\* Matt 25 : 14 - 26 - The Good News Bible



her? As per prevailing Jewish customs she has committed a penal offence. She has polluted the Jewish Rabbi by touching him. Here is a woman weak and frail discarded by everyone, ostracised by society but who has now been cured of her disease. But the fact remains that she still is a cruel victim of circumstances. She has no claim on a home that welcomes her back. She is penniless. Jesus addresses her as 'daughter', 'go in peace'. On other words you are healed and restored, and from now on, you are accepted back to my household. This is the healing that she longed for which only the Great Physician could make possible.

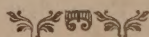
How do we deal with the people who come to us seeking relief from pain suffering and grief? Do we really give our preferential option for the poor who seek our help? We have had many occasions to raise this issue with hospital administrators and doctors. Can the poor clients afford the cost of treatment? Don't we consider them more as a burden and a continuing liability? Do we take into account the total patient and his needs and that of his family when we order special and costlier investigations? Do we order an additional X-ray, an ECG or for that matter, a scanning, a surgical intervention, only if these are inescapable? Would you withhold these if one is not able to meet the cost thereof? The guidelines given to us are very clear. Whatever we do for the least of these brethren would be taken as services rendered to me. This puts us really in a very uncomfortable situation. By our casualness, and lack of commitment, and the failure to adhere to goals, we might have denied our institutional facilities to our lord Himself many a time! This argument may look very naive on the face of it, but nevertheless something that cannot be brushed aside lightly. There appears to be a great need for a new variety of 'medical audit' to be taken up by each and every one of us in all seriousness.

Let us look at the parable of the talents once again. How skillfully did we trade with the resources entrusted to us by the master? We all are fairly familiar with the attitude of many of our administrators. These are all shrewd men who are extremely careful to preserve and maintain the master's treasure entrusted to them for safe-keeping. The earnest endeavour is to see that the treasure returned intact without blemish or visible damage! As administrators the goal more often than not is to come out with a balance sheet with a surplus. I need not elaborate the processes involved in this difficult balancing act! When the master returns and claims his treasure,

one is ready to return it intact. At the end of a successful tenure of office, the hospital is handed over to the successor quite in shape. 'You entrusted me this hospital and here it is, take it back'. What response do you expect from the master. Master can turn round and say something like this. 'You ran this hospital mostly for the benefit of those who could afford to pay for services like all others. To satisfy their needs or better still more their ego, you indulged in hi-tech inputs, with the result your institution became increasingly inaccessible to those who are poor. More than that, you shut your eyes to the health care needs of people all around you. There are hundreds of infants dying of dehydration all because their mothers do not know about the life saving ORT nor about the benefits of immunisation that can prevent children from major killer/disabling diseases. 30-40 thousand children in your country lose their eye sight due to the lack of Vit. A in their diet. You had scant regard for these unmet needs of my people; you hardly took steps to stall these ravages. All the same you were concerned about preserving your institution and its prestige. In fact you buried your treasure so that it could be returned intact to the master.'

Hospital administrators have often told me that they set apart some beds for treating patients who cannot afford to pay, say about 10 per cent. The all-too-familiar equation is that the surplus income generated from 90 per cent of paying patients are utilised for treating the 10 per cent non-paying—'the balancing act'. It may sound totally unrealistic but my plea has been to reverse the ratio as 10:90, in order to justify our calling and the mission. The resources can certainly come from within the local congregations when once the cardinal message of the Healing Ministry is understood and internalised by them.

We certainly have to be accountable as custodians of the resources that we handle each day. These 'resources' are precious in the sight of God whether it is a local source or a gift from a partner abroad. We who handle such resources seldom remember that in the ultimate analysis, it is the widow's mite, gifted to God for the service of the needy and the suffering. I conclude with the fervent prayer and hope that this convention would help us to re-examine our goals and priorities as well as the style of operation in order to ensure greater accountability to God in respect of all that we have been entrusted with.





# NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

## RAYALASEEMA DIOCESE

### AMBEDKAR JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS HELD AT ADONI (AP)

Babasaheb Ambedkar's Birth Anniversary was celebrated with pomp and gaiety as well as serious reflection at Adoni town in Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh on April 14th, 1989. Dalith, men and women, from over 30 neighbouring villages, sympathisers, activists participated in the day-long celebrations. This momentous event was co-sponsored by—the Ambedkar Youth Association, Adoni, the Ambedkar Seva Mandal, Alur, the Dalith Welfare Association, Adoni, the Bellary Area Rural Development Society, Kowthalam, the SC, ST Employees Welfare Association, Adoni, the Development Board of the CSI Rayalaseema Diocese. In fact, the Rayalaseema Diocese of the Church of South India was amply represented by the Bishop himself Rt. Rev. L. V. Azariah as well as other Diocesan dignitaries, viz., Rev. M. Manohar (Diocesan Secretary), Rev. D. Ikyatha Rao (Convenor : Diocesan Development Board), Rev. K. Yohan (Secretary, Diocesan Church Board), Sis. Ammini Philipose (Convenor : Diocesan Women's Work Committee) and a handful of presbyters from the other parts of the Diocese.

A consultation on the thought of Ambedkar was held at Chinmaya Vidyalaya led by Mr. Sreerama Murthy, a practising Buddhist and ardent ambedkarite and who also happens to be the Executive Engineer, Panchayathraj, Adoni ; Ms. Radha Charan, an activist from Kowthalam and Shri S. Johnson, a lecturer from Siripuram, near Guntur. The post-lunch sessions were set-apart for the cultural presentations by various village teams on the issues of untouchability and poverty.

The public function in the evening was presided by Shri Subba Reddy, the Revenue Divisional Officer (deputed by the Collector of Kurnool). The guest of honour for the evening, Bishop Azariah spoke how the church on one hand put-up determined fight against all forms of social evils that impoverishes the dignity of men and women or wrecks peoples' true communitarian living, while on the other hand, the church today, if it is true to its calling acknowledges and strengthens every effort of persons (like Ambedkar) and movements that struggle for peace and justice.

The co-convenors of the above celebrations committee were : Shri Devadanam, General Secretary of the SC, ST Employees Welfare Society, Adoni and Rev. R. Daniel Premkumar, Divisional Chairman, CSI, Adoni.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE W.F. IN CSI NANDYAL DIOCESE

The main aim of the Women's Fellowship in our Diocese is to spread the Gospel of Jesus as far as we the WF members are able to do. So to this end we have drawn up our programme for 1988-1989 in our WF Diocesan Council.

We have taken each month in the calendar and are trying to have some kind of WF activity in it apart from the regular W.F. branch meetings.

These are the activities, we have drawn up. CSI WF festival in Sept. ; Healing Ministry among the village people in October ; Clergy wives Retreat in November ; Christmas dramas are conducted by WF in villages in December. Spiritual Renewal Conference was held in January in Nandyal for the whole Diocese. In February we had a week of Evangelism, where we went to one village for gospel for one week. The World Day of Prayer in the Lenten season and street prayers in Lent. We visited the villages in the night for gospel work in May. We have branch retreats in June and WF Diocesan Retreat and Council in July.

In this spreading of Gospel we the WF Branch at Nandyal, have adopted a village about 6 to 7 km from Nandyal ; we go there every 3rd Sunday. The main reason for adopting it is the husbands are heathen married to Christian women and they do not allow the women to attend any of our meetings. So wherever it is possible we visit their homes and give the good news. There are other women in this village, who invite us to their home for prayer and there are muslim women too who are eager to hear the Gospel and so we are much encouraged. The children in this village are very eager to hear and learn. So we have two children's missionaries who minister to them. At one time we could not visit the village for some months due to rain and other causes. After that when we went there and were sitting in a house for prayer, all the children flocked around us and asked us to sing songs. We asked them to sing and praise till Lord ; they sang all the songs we had taught with such enthusiasm that our hearts were lifted and we felt that they would be the future force with light shining in them.

May His name be glorified in everything.

MRS. S. R. DEVAPRIAM  
President, Women Fellowship  
Diocese of Nandyal



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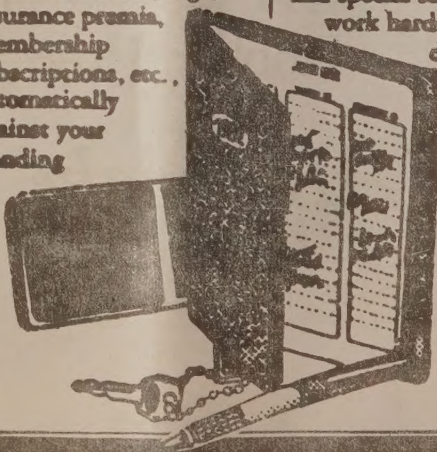
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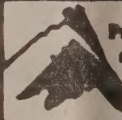
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